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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1336
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RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002360

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

State for EAP/CM - SFlatt, JHabjan
State for EEB/CIP - SFlynn, FSaeed
USTR for Awinter, JMCHale, TWineland, AMain
Commerce for MAC
Commerce for ITA - IKasoff, NMelcher
DOJ for CCIPS - MDubose and SChechtob
FBI for LBryant
State for White House OSTP Ambassador Richard Russell
NSC for Melissa Hathaway

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [ECON](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: CHINA OFFICIALLY "UNINSTALLS" GREEN DAM INTERNET
CENSORING SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS. . . FOR NOW

Reftels: BEIJING 1538
BEIJING 1520

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) Minister Li announced August 13 computers sold in China would not be subject to mandatory internet censorship software requirements. The remarks represent the highest level signal to date that the Chinese government has officially abandoned earlier plans requiring all computers sold in China to include Chinese-produced "Green Dam" internet filtering software. Industry representatives, while viewing the announcement as positive, remain skeptical of the Chinese government's longer-term plans and do not rule out the later re-imposition of similar controls in one form or another. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) MIIT Minister Li Yizhong, at an August 13 press conference, announced that China "as to the majority of consumers, [would] fully respect freedom of choice; we will not mandatorily install [Green Dam] software on all computers in the market." Minister Li noted, however, that Green Dam would continue to be installed on computers in schools, internet cafes, and other public places.

¶3. (SBU) Li attempted to backpedal gracefully, explaining that MIIT's original May 22, 2009 circular had mischaracterized MIIT's actual (and current) position. (Note: MIIT initially, had mandated that all computers sold in China, whether imported or domestically-produced, include pre-installed Chinese-produced Green Dam filtering software effective July 1, 2009. See reftels. End Note.) Industry and popular backlash quickly followed, along with interventions by foreign governments, including the U.S., prompting MIIT to announce June 30 that it was "delaying" indefinitely the implementation of the Green Dam software requirement.

¶4. (SBU) MIIT's deferred implementation has now become an effective reversal of its prior mandate, though Minister Li suggested MIIT's next steps would involve soliciting a wide range of views regarding implementation of such software where it is required, i.e., schools, internet cafes, and other public computers.

Industry Reaction Mixed

15. (SBU) Local U.S. Information and Technology Office (USITO) analyst Wen Jie expressed continued skepticism over the Chinese government's longer term plans regarding such software. He observed that the fact Minister Li emphasized "consumer choice" could still leave the door open to impose requirements upon manufacturers to offer such software on computers sold in China (whether activated or not). Wen Jie noted many details of the plan remain unclear, but added, at the very least, MIIT's formal August 13 statement is useful precedent in any subsequent battles industry and consumers may undertake relating to this issue.

16. (SBU) Dell Computer's local senior manager, Ryan Zhang, suggested a policy reversal could come as early as within six months. Zhang expressed similar skepticism over how definitive Minister's Li's statement really is, given his emphasis on offering "consumer" choice (not/not on manufacturer's businQs decisions to pre-install software or co-package). Zhang suggested MIIT and other Chinese government policymakers could still decide to make censorship software mandatory, but handle the public relations more carefully.

17. (SBU) Another local information technology analyst echoed concerns regarding China's moving target on censorship software, especially industry concerns over ambiguities regarding acceptable distribution methods and cost-bearing, which are still unclear following MIIT's announcements. The analyst noted some computer manufacturers, including Chinese producers Acer and Lenovo, have complied with MIIT's original mandate to pre-install Green Dam on all computers sold in China. Apple Computer local government relations representative told us that although Apple received an

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early waiver from MIIT (Green Dam reportedly is incompatible with Apple operating system), Apple nonetheless is seeking approval of its existing parental control applications for its computers used here in the education field.

18. (SBU) Comment. Post views MIIT's latest announcement as confirmation of China's decision to defer (for now) imposing internet censorship software on Chinese computer consumers. This significantly reduces the immediate associated difficulties for manufacturers. Though they remain cautious about declaring final victory, industry representatives clearly feel emboldened by having convinced China to reverse its policy course. Industry and the growing (and likely a vocal chorus of Chinese "netizens") stand ready to re-engage should China seek to revisit internet censorship mandates any time soon. Embassy will also continue to monitor the issue closely. End comment.

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